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SUBJECT: TFH01: MEDIA REACTION HONDURAN POLITICAL CRISIS 8-21-09

"Dialogue is the best instrument."

¶1. (U) Editorial in the Tegucigalpa-based conservative paper El Heraldito (8-21-09): "Time passes and there does not seem to be a way out of the political crisis. The isolation from the regime continues and with the suspension of some funds for key projects such as the Dry Channel; this last case is very symptomatic, considering that the Central American Bank took this decision, precisely at the initiative of the Honduran representation, supported by the Zelaya government. The daily manifestations from those who reject the events on June 28, which now includes even vehicle caravans, and their vandalism, and the abuse of force from police; the terrorist attacks, the restriction of and the campaigns against media, and some calls for violence, are also negative elements that threaten social peace and even personal security, as well as overshadow the present and the future of Honduras. This week, however, the environment is quieter. Of course, the presence of the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (CIDH) seems to have calmed the turbulent waters: the protests have been peaceful, and teachers have gone back to classes. In the case of the teachers, the popular pressure has been intense; the parents have left their passive side behind and are now active to demand the fulfillment of the teachers' functions. A delegation from the current regime has traveled to Washington to talk not only to OAS but to the Department of State as well. The situation in the country will become totally normal if space for dialogue is given that allows Honduras to recuperate the international trust as a country who lives in democracy and in absolute respect for law. The two sides in conflict must recognize their mistakes and act thinking more about Honduras, in its people, in democracy than in their own interests or conveniences; they must put to one side their selfishness, their psychological complexes, their pride and vanity so that this suffering country soon can reinitiate its path toward a more prosperous future, more democratic, more equal, more unified and more fair."

"The top-ten bad things about diplomatic hypocrisy."

¶2. (U) Op-ed by Elisa Elias in El Heraldito (8-21-09): " In the Honduran political crisis that started with the events on June 28, there has risen truly amazing and exemplary demonstrations in hypocrisy from many latitudes of the world diplomatic specter, from which we can highlight ten: 1) Condemnation with extreme severity a fact that has its own origin and which organizations and the international community never wanted to know about; meanwhile in other countries there have been continued violations to democracy and with the minimal denunciation. 2) That in front of the entire

world there have been true coup d'états to democracy, as the well-known attacks to mayors, media and education of a country, under silent protection of the community and international organizations, as if expecting some kind of self-defense reaction from those so afterwards they can signal them with all the weight of condemnation because of rebellion. 3) That apparently de facto governments and historical anti-democratic practices are condemning and even intervening in what they consider a de facto government; paraphrasing, they are seeing the straw in someone else's eye without seeing their own beam. 4) That the entire community voted unanimously on the incorporation of a country that does not practice democratic principles, something antithetical, because they don't even practice free elections nor freedom of speech; and in the same way unanimously expel one of its traditional members because of a clearly internal problem that deserved a better consideration. 5) To condemn the diplomatic and economic blockages as inhumane and troglodyte; but without the least investigation they rush to block and consequently cause the imminent damage to one of its minor brothers. 6) That a true pure-bred coup-maker, who tried a bloody but frustrated coup d'état in his country, condemn selfish and energetically with the same terms that categorize him perfectly. 7) That people talk about usurpation and coup d'état when not even the minimal modification of the Constitution has been done and the public powers remain untouched. 8) That the forces of pressure try the restitution issue as the solution for the people's well-being; when not even by curiosity or dignity do they try to take a look or be interested in the true will of the majority of people. 9) That the expelled protagonist in unison with his colleagues, run like children in search for support and intercession in their favor from the one they considered, conceptually and by doctrine, as their imperialistic enemy. 10) And the award goes to the fact that the person and the international organization which a few weeks before

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the presidential succession was besieged with insults by the group of democratic totalitarians suddenly became qualified to be part of main flank of attack in their plan to fight and reestablish their territorial interests."

"Russian roulette."

13. (U) Editorial in the San Pedro Sula-based liberal paper Tiempo (8-21-09): "As happens in all negotiations, you start with the easiest to clear the path towards the solution of the difficult, and it seems that this is what is happening with the extra-official conversations done in Washington on the San Jose Agreement to reestablish in Honduras the constitutional and institutional order. The de facto Presidential Minister, Rafael Pineda Ponce, has given declarations in this sense, with rotund emphasis to leave no doubt about the de facto government's determination to not cede in its dictatorship position, and , total rejection of the peaceful solution to the political crisis. According to his declaration, even though 85 percent of the San Jose Agreement has reached consensus, he (Ponce) says that the remaining 15 percent is on Zelaya's restitution, and that cannot be allowed. He said that the return of Zelaya with no conditions is not negotiable. According to the OAS and UN resolution, the restoration of the constitutional order demands, (without question), the devolution of the Executive branch to its legitimate owner, elected freely in general elections, or at least, that the conflict be solved through the constitution.

What is impossible, with or without the '15 percent,' is to redo the constitutional order with an electoral process developed and done in a de facto situation, supposedly guaranteed by military force and the allies that perpetrated the coup. But this kind of reasoning is unlikely for those who want to maintain the de facto regime that bet on the electoral solution in a fragile and illegitimate platform, which, would not count with the popular participation or secure international recognition. It is like playing the Russian roulette. It seems that the de facto regime is not recognizing, on purpose, the importance of political parties as legitimate intermediaries among the citizenry and the public power, because it is clear that the nature of a de facto regime is, by definition, dictatorial and leaves political institutions adrift; and the basic interests of the de facto regime are from the ones who created the situation for their own benefit. We could refer to the coup businessmen, military, religious leaders and the supporting

politicians. This mentality leads to the destruction of existing political parties, mainly the traditional, and this is a phenomenon that is near in the Honduran horizon, that will become more evident if, as we have signaled and seen from abroad, does not achieve the constitutional restoration in the short-term, before it might be too late."